

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00

USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 ACDA-05 OMB-01 /056 W

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O R 040938Z NOV 75

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3700

INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 8534

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (TO TEXTS NBRD PARA SIX)

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, PFOR, KS

SUBJECT: KOREAN REACTION TO U.S. ADMINISTRATION PERSONNEL CHANGES

SUMMARY: KOREAN PRESS GAVE PRIME PLAY NOV. 4 TO FORD  
ADMINISTRATION RANKING PERSONNEL CHANGES. MEDIA REVIEW AND KOREANS  
WITH WHOM EMBASSY HAS SPOKEN TO DATE EVIDENCED CONCSRN OVER  
SHIFTS. BOTH EMBASSY, AND APPARENTLY ROKG, MOVING TO PROVIDE  
PROPER REASSURANCES. END SUMMARY.

1. SEOUL NOV. 4 KOREAN AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE PRESS GAVE  
TOP FRONT-PAGE PLAY TO PRESIDENT FORD'S CHANGES IN RANKING  
ADMINISTRATION PERSONALITIES, FOCUSING PRIMARILY ON REPLACE-  
MENT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE SCHLESINGER, WHO HAS BEEN PERCEIVED  
WIDELY HERE AS EMBODIMENT STRONG U.S. COMMITMENT TO DEFENSE  
ROK. COVERAGE HAS BEEN HEAVY, WITH BULK OF TREATMENT  
CONSISTING OF DETAILED FACTUAL ACCOUNTS.O

2. HANKUK ILBO HAS LED LIMITED ANALYTICAL COMMENTARY TO DATE,  
TERMING SCHLESINGER REMOVAL "MOST SHOCKING" AND SEEING IT AS  
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PARTLY CONSEQUENCE "FEUD" BETWEEN SECRETARIS KISSINGER AND

SCHLESINGER AND PARTLY RESULT PRESIDENT FORD'S PREPARATION FOR 1976 SLECTIONS. TONGA ILBO SAID THAT, ALTHOUGH THE SHIFTS HAVE CAUSED SOME PEOPLE TO WORRY ABOUT A CHANGE IN U.S. POLICY TOWARD THE ROK, PRESIDENT FORD RETAINS THE RIGHT TO ULTIMATELY DETERMINE POLICY. CHUNGANG ILBO, BRIEFLY NOTED THAT SCHLESINGER DEPARTURE WILL AKFECT KOREA WHOSE DEFENSE HE STRONGLY SUPPORTED.

3. IN ANTICIPATION CONCERNS ALL PAPERS HAVE ALSO CARRIED SUCCINCT REASSURANCE FROM AN UNIDENTIFIED "HIGH RANKING SOURCE IN THE GOVERNMENT" THAT THERE WILL BE NO CHANGE IN USG POLICY TOWARD THE ROK, AS NEWLY-NAMED SECRETARY OF DEFENSE RUMSFELD IS "A POSITIVE, ENERGETIC CONSERVATIVE.

4. IMMEDIATE GENERAL REACTION OF KOREANS WITH WHOM WE HAVE SPOKEN HAS BEEN ONE OF SOME ANXIETY. IN NOVEMBER 4 TALK WITH GENERAL STILWELL CONCERNING REPORTED IMPENDING SHIFTS, MND SUH JYONG CHUL WAS VERY DISTURBED BY PROSPECT SECRETARY SCHLESINGER'S DEPARTURE FROM SEC DEF POSITION. GENERAL STILWELL GAVE MDN STRONG ASSURANCE THAT CABINET CHANGE MEANT NO CHANGE U.S. POLICY TOWARD KOREA, REMINDING MND THAT SECRETARY SCHLESINGER'S REMARKS AT RECENT SCM WERE REFLECTION OF PRESIDENT'S OWN VIEWS. MND SUH ACCEPTED THESE REMARKS WITHOUT COMMENT.

5. DURING INFORMAL JOINT CONVERSATION WITH DCM NOVEMBER 4, NATIONAL ASSEMBLY SPEAKER CHONG IL-KWON, CHIEF JUSTICE MIN POK KEE AND DONGA ILBO PUBLISHER KIM SANG-MAN ALL EXPRESSED CONCERN RE SCHLESINGER REMOVAL. THIS WAS EVIDENT IN QUESTIONS WHETHER PRESIDENT FORD'S RETENTION SECRETARY KISSINGER, WHILE RELIEVING SECRETARY SCHLESINGER, MEANT GREATER U.S. INTEREST IN DETENTE, WITH COLLATERAL DIMINUTION MILITARY PREPAREDNESS IN GENERAL. NOTING THEIR LACK OF FAMILIARITY WITH MR. RUMSFELD'S ATTITUDES AND VIEWS, THEY ASKED WHETHER HIS APPOINTMENT MIGHT ALTER SEC DEF SCHLESINGER'S STRONG ASSURANCES OF SUPPORT FOR ROK BOTH BEFORE AND THROUGHOUT 8TH SCM. DCM REPLIED THAT SECRETARY-DESIGNATE RUMSFELD HAS BEEN VERY CLOSE TO PRESIDENT FORD AND, AS SEC DEF, WOULD CONTINUE REFLECT PRESIDENTIAL POLICIES. SUCH ASSURANCES AS SECRETARY SCHLESINGER HAD MADE REPRESENTED USG POLICY APPROVED BY THE PRESIDENT, AS SECRETARY SCHLESINGER CONFIDENTIAL

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HIMSLEF HAD REPEATEDLY STATED DURING SCM, AND THIS POLICY WOULD REMAIN FUNDAMENTALLY UNCHANGED.

6. MOFA OFFICIALS, TALKING WITH EMBOFF EVENING NOV. 3, VOICED PARTICULAR CONCERN ABOUT HOW NORTH KOREA WOULD PERCEIVE REPLACEMENT SCHLESINGER, AS THEY FELT SEC DEF HAD BECOME SYMBOL TO NORTH KOREANS OF U.S. DETERMINATION TO HOLD FIRM AND TO QNISH ANY NORTH KOREAN AGGRESSION. HIS ROLE AS SYMBOL OF

U.S. CONSTANCY HAD ALSO MADE MARKED IMPRESSION ON SOUTH  
KOREANS AND HIS REMOVAL WOULD, THEY SAID, BE REGARDED AS A  
TRIUMPH OF THE FORCES OF COMPROMISE OVER THOSE WHO ADVOCATED  
A STRONG STANCE VIS-A-VIS THE SOVIETS AND THEIR NORTH  
KOREAN ALLIES. EMBOFF REMINDED FORNOFF OFFICIALS THAT  
PRESIDENT FORD AND SEC KISSINGER ARE ADVOCATES OF NEGOTIATIONS  
FROM POSITIONS OF STRENGTH AND TOOK TACK IN RESPONSE SIMILAR  
TO DCM'S ABOVE.  
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**TAGS:** MILI, PFOR, KS, (FORD, GERALD R), (SCHLESINGER, JAMES R)  
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